

Children's Sermon

The Mourners.

By Rev. Stuart Nye Hutchison, D. D.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.—Matthew 5:4.

When we see people dressed in black and looking so sad and sorrowful, it makes us very sorry. We know that they are mourning for some one who has been taken away from them. In the second beatitude Jesus said, "Blessed," that is, "happy," are they that mourn. It always seems to us that there cannot be very much happiness in mourning, and if it had not been Jesus who spoke those words we would think that there must be some mistake. But Jesus, who knows so much more than we know, said it, and we know that it must be true.

How does mourning bring happiness? Let me tell if I can, and see if we can understand just what this beatitude means.

All boys and girls like candy and cake, but if you had nothing to eat but candy and cake, you would soon become very sick of it. We all like to have clear days, when the sun shines all the time and we can play. Maybe sometimes we have thought when the rain came down and spoiled our fun, what a fine thing it would be to live in a place where it never rains. Suppose you could go to-day to a land where it never rains, what would you find there? You would find a desert. Nothing grows in the desert. It is sand, sand everywhere and no one can live in the desert. We must have the rain as well as the sunshine so that plants, and animals, and boys and girls can live. So we see it would not do to have all sunshine. Therefore, God gives us rain along with the rest.

In the same way, boys and girls, God doesn't give us all pleasure. If He did we would become like that desert, worthless and good-for-nothing. He sends us trouble and sorrow sometimes, to make our hearts grow. You know the heart must grow as well as the body and the mind.

Then God sends us trouble. He makes us mourn, so that we can think of Him. There was a mother once who had a little boy whom she loved very much. He became sick and died, and the poor, sad mother was heart-

broken. A little while after one of her friends met her and said, "I am so sorry. It is so sad." The mother said, "Yes, but I can understand it all. I didn't think before about God at all. All I thought of was myself and having a good time. But God took my little boy up to live with Him. And then I began to think: 'I want to see him again some time. And if I am ever to see him, I must go up to live with God, too.' And then I began to wonder whether I was ready to go to be with him. Now I am trying to live so that when the time comes there will be a place there for me, too, beside him."

But there is something else that we ought to mourn over. It is our sins. Long ago there was a very wicked city called Nineveh. It was one of the wickedest cities that ever was. At last God told one of His prophets to go and tell the people that unless they repented He would destroy the whole city. So the prophet went and told the people what God had said. They were very much afraid and asked the prophet what they should do, so that God might have mercy and save them. This is what he told them, "Go and put on mourning everyone of you." They were to mourn for their sins. They did as the prophet told them, and all went into mourning, and God saved the city.

Do you know why the monks and nuns all wear black. It is the mourning color. It is not because someone has died. It is because of their sins. They are mourning for their evil deeds.

There are two kinds of men and women and boys and girls. One kind, when they do something wrong say, "I don't care." They are not sorry for what they have done. They make God very angry. The other kind are the people who, when they have done wrong, are sad and sorrowful, and kneel down and ask God to forgive them. This is what we mean by mourning for our sins. It is being sorry and asking God to forgive us, and promising never to do it again.

It isn't so hard after all, is it, to know what Jesus meant, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Norfolk, Va.

tients. Testaments were pulled out to see to what is printed. What could he mean? And here one and there another read the precious words, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "It was to do me good, and so it has!" the sufferer cried. Luther called this verse "The Miniature Bible." When these poor sick folk read the tender words and heard the unconscious comment—"It was to do me good, and so it has!"—the spirit stirred within them, and God the Holy Ghost used that text then and there to the conversion of souls. There was "joy in the presence of the angels of God" over sinners that repented. The sovereign power of God the Holy Spirit, used this one text from the lips of a poor ignorant boy in that hospital ward and souls were saved.

Consciousness returned, and the poor little fellow gazed around him; how vast it looked! and how quiet it was! Where was he? Presently a voice from the next bed said—John Thr-ree

Sixteen, and how are you to-day, "Why, how do you know my new name? Know it! You've never ceased with your John Thr-ree Sixteen, and I for one say, Blessed John Thr-ree Sixteen!" This sounded strange to the little lad's ears. To be called "blessed"—he for whom no one cared. "And don't you know where it comes from? It's from the Bible."

"The Bible! what's that?" The poor little waif had never heard of the Bible—that blessed book, God's word to man. "Read it to me," he said; and as the words fell on his ear, he muttered, "That's beautiful! it's all about love and not a home for a night, but a home for always!" He soon learned the text, saying, "I have not only got a new name, but something to it."

Days passed on and there were changes in the ward but our little friend never felt lonely; he fed on his text and its precious words.

Another soul in that ward was to be won to Christ by his means, and now in simple conscious faith he was to be the agent of blessing.

On a cot near by him lay an old man who was very ill. Early one morning a nun came to his bedside, and said, "Patrick, how is it with you to-day?" "Badly, badly!" groaned the old man. "Has the priest been to see you?" asked the nun. "Oh, yes, but that only makes it worse, for he has anointed me with the holy oil, and I am marked for death. I'm no' fit to die—oh, what shall I do?" "Patrick, it's very sad to see you so," she gently answered; "look! here are these beads, they have been blessed by His Holiness the Pope, and they will help you to die happy." She placed them around his neck, and then, wishing him good-bye, went out. But how could a string of beads ease a dying man facing eternity, with his sins unforgiven? Poor Patrick groaned aloud. "God ha' mercy!" he cried; "I am such a sinner, I'm no' fit to die. What shall I do? Oh, what will become o' me?"

Our little fellow heard his miserable words. "Poor old man," thinks he; "he wants a pass." "Patrick," he called, "I know something that will do you good—quite sure—it has done me." "Tell me, tell me quickly," cried Patrick. "If only I could find something to do me good." "Here it is. Now listen, John 3:16. Are you listening?" "Yes, yes, go on." "John 3:16—'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" Through these words Patrick found peace in his dying hour, and entered into everlasting life—another soul brought to Christ in that hospital ward by means of a single text blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Our little friend recovered. For long, John Three Sixteen was his one text. God blessed his simple faith; friends placed him at school, and now he is an earnest hearty worker for the Master.

"Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." Luke 11:28.

Children's Letters

HAS A GOOD SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

Dear Presbyterian: I am a little girl twelve years old. I am in the fourth grade. We have thirty-two scholars in our school. I have one brother going to school. Miss Carrie Patterson is my teacher. She is really pretty and she takes the Presbyterian of the South. I go to the Christian Church. My Sunday-school teacher is Mrs. Susie Martin and she is a good teacher.

From your truly friend,
Richmond, Va. Manchie Lee Martin.

ASKED GOD TO HELP HER.

Dear Presbyterian: I am a little girl 10 years old today, November 27th, 1916. I go to the same school I went to last year. I am in the third grade. My teacher is Miss Carrie Patterson. She is good to me. I will be glad when Santa Claus comes. Hope he will not forget me. I go to Sunday-school as often as I can. I am in a class of 45 little girls. I try to be a good girl, and obey my mother the best that I can. I ask the Lord to keep my lips pure and clean all through the day. May they speak alone truth, dear Lord, I pray!

Gladys E. Tucker.
Ellerson, Va., R. 1.

If tomorrow should mark your entrance into glory, then live today as you will wish you had when you see him.—Chapman.